

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 219648

FOLLOWING REPEAT KABUL 6273 ACTION SECSTATE INFO USUN
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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 6273

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, PFOR, AF

SUBJ: BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR DEPFONMIN WAHEED ABDULLAH VISIT;
AFGHAN FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. FOLLOWING IS SUGGESTED BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON AFGHAN

FOREIGN RELATIONS (PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS SEPTTEL) FOR USE OF U.S.
OFFICIALS WHO WILL MEET WITH AFGHAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
(DE FACTO FOREIGN MINISTER) WAHEED ABDULLAH DURING HIS OCT
5-11 NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON VISIT.

2. SINCE THE COUP IN JULY 1973, PRESIDENT DAOUD AND HIS BROTHER
AND MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR, NAIM, HAVE PURSUED A MORE
ACTIVIST FOREIGN POLICY THAN THE PREVIOUS ROYAL GOVERNMENT.
TWO UNDERLYING THEMES ARE DISCERNIBLE BENEATH AFGHAN ATTEMPTS
TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES
IN THE REGION: 1) REFURBISHING ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS,
THEREBY POLITICALLY COUNTERBALANCING AFGHAN MILITARY AND
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ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION, AND 2) ATTEMPTING

TO ISOLATE PAKISTAN DIPLOMATICALLY BY GAINING SYMPATHY FOR THE AFGHAN POSITION ON PUSHTUNISTAN. WHILE SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING THESE AIMS HAS NOT YET BEEN TESTED, AFGHANISTAN HAS MANAGED SUBSTANTIALLY TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA, MOST NOTABLY IRAN AND INDIA.

3. RELATIONS WITH IRAN WERE TOUCHY FOLLOWING THE JULY 1973 COUP AS THE NEW REGIME ACCUSED THE FORMER GOVERNMENT OF SELLING OUT AFGHAN INTERESTS IN THE THEN, AS NOW, UNSIGNED TREATY OVER THE USE OF THE WATER OF THE HELMAND RIVER AND AS THE SHAH WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET INFLUENCE WITH THE NEW REGIME. THE SHAH'S APPARENT CONCLUSION THAT IRAN CAN HELP KEEP AFGHANISTAN OUT OF SOVIET CLUTCHES, IRANIAN SKILL IN DEALING WITH AFGHAN SENSITIVITIES, AND AFGHAN DESIRES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS HAVE LED TO IRANIAN AGREEMENT TO SPEND 10-20 MILLION DOLLARS IN SURVEYS WITH THE EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF PERHAPS 2 BILLION DOLLARS IN IRANIAN DEVELOPMENT AID. THE HELMAND WATERS PROBLEM WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF BY JOINT PROJECTS IN THE VALLEY. THE MOST RECENT TESTAMENT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS IS AN AGREEMENT GIVING AFGHANISTAN THE RIGHT OF UNIMPEDED AND FREE TRANSIT OF ITS IMPORTS AND EXPORTS THROUGH IRAN.

4. AFGHAN AND INDIAN AIMS HAVE MESHED TO THE EXTENT THAT AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED PROVIDING INDIAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY TRAINING. INDIA HAS ALSO PUBLICLY SUPPORTED AFGHANISTAN IN THE FACE OF PAKISTAN'S CHARGES OF AFGHAN MILITANCE AND INTERFERENCE IN PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

5. AFGHANISTAN HAS ALSO ATTEMPTED WITH SOME SUCCESS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH OTHER ISLAMIC, MOST NOTABLY SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT, IRAQ AND TURKEY.

6. WHILE AN AIM OF AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY APPEARS TO BE THE COUNTERBALANCING OF DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR-AFGHANISTAN'S MAJOR TRADING PARTNER - AND SOLE SOURCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT - AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS REMAIN EXCELLENT AND HIGHLY VISIBLE.

7. AFGHAN-US RELATIONS REMAIN GOOD, THOUGH THERE WAS SOME SUSPICION OF US INTENTIONS FOLLOWING THE COUP. THE MAINTENANCE OF CONTINUED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES IS AN CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPORTANT FACET OF THE GOA'S GOAL OF PRESERVING ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS AND POLITICALLY COUNTERING AFGHAN DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS. WHILE THE DESIRE TO PRESERVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND TO HAVE A VISIBLE US PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN HAS OFTEN BEEN EXPRESSED BY PRESIDENT DAOUD AND HIS TOP ADVISORS, THE SAME AWARENESS HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN APPARENT AT THE WORKING LEVEL INTERFACE OF THE MINISTRIES AND THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE US MISSION. HOWEVER, SUCH DIFFICULTIES,

WHICH TEND TO BE CYCLIC, SEEM MORE A RESULT OF UNCERTAINTY,
LACK OF DIRECTION, AND AN URGE TO CAUTION IN THE MINISTRIES,
THAN A CONTRADICTION OF THE EXPRESS AFGHAN DESIRE TO PRE-
SERVE AND IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

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